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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 000623

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER BERBICHE REBEL ALIGNS WITH TUAREG ADC

REF: BAMAKO 00371

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Ahmed Ould Sidi Mohamed, the founder of the Armed Islamic Front for the Azawad (FIAA) during northern Mali's 1991-1996 rebellion and a leader of north-west Mali's Berabiche community, recently traveled east of Kidal to meet with Tuareg rebels. He reportedly pledged Berabiche support for the Tuareg rebel Alliance for Democracy and Change (ADC).

2.(C) On July 2 an organization known as the Association of Berabiche Leaders of Northern Mali issued a statement denouncing "a group of former FIAA leaders" that recently aligned itself with ADC. The statement was signed by Abderrahmane Ould Sid Ould Hamma and expressed support, on behalf of ethnic Arabs of northern Mali, for the Malian Government, peace and dialogue. The president of the Berabiche leaders' Association is Lamine Tahar, a prominent Timbuktu businessman who is also president of the Union of Malian Arab Communities (Ref. A). Tahar, Abderrahmane Ould Sid Ould Hamma and most other Malian Berabiche live in the region of Timbuktu.

3.(C) Coment: Ahmed Ould Sidi Mohamed is apparently based in Mauritania and may or may not hold dual Malian-Mauritanian nationality. During the 1991-1996 rebellion he earned a reputation for aligning himself with Tuareg rebel movements just as they were on the verge of signing Algerian-brokered agreements with the Malian Government. His decision to travel to Kidal to meet with contemporary Tuareg rebels may indicate that he and a small number of Berabiche ex-rebels from the 1990s believe the ADC is close to reaching a new peace deal with the Malians. The press release issued by Ould Sid Ould Hamma is likely an effort to preempt a statement by Ould Sidi Mohamed on behalf of northern Mali's Berabiche community.
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